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## Teen Driver Safety Week is Oct. 21-27

*Week highlights ways for teens to be safe behind the wheel*

Next week is National Teen Driver Safety Week, and the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) encourages parents and guardians to talk to their teens about the responsibilities that come with driving.

During National Teen Driver Safety Week, which is from Oct. 21-27, the OTS will be offering tips to parents and caregivers on ways they can be involved in helping their teens stay safe behind the wheel.

The reality is that vehicle crashes remain the leading cause of death for 15 to 20-year-olds. In 2016, 175 drivers ages 16 to 20 were killed on California roads, according to data from the Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System (SWITRS). Another 48,874 drivers were injured in crashes across the state involving drivers ages 16 to 20.

"Teenagers are more likely to be involved in a crash because of inexperience and inattention," OTS Director Rhonda Craft said. "It all starts with educating teens about the consequences of taking dangerous actions while driving, and modeling good behaviors, like staying off the phone and not speeding."

There are steps parents and caregivers can take to reduce the risks for teen drivers:

- Learn about California's Graduated Driver License (GDL) laws, which place restrictions on passengers and driving late at night during the first year a license is issued.
- Lead by example. Drive how you would want your teen to drive.
- Set ground rules, like no texting or phone calls while driving, no speeding and no passengers. Outline consequences for not following the rules.
- Teach your teen about zero-tolerance laws and the adult consequences they can face if caught driving after drinking or using drugs. Let them know driving is a privilege that can be taken away by making poor choices.

To learn more about teen driver safety, visit the Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) website.

Parents and guardians can also sign their teen up for a free driver safety education class at their local California Highway Patrol (CHP) office. The CHP's "Start Smart" program teaches soon-to-be and newly licensed teens about GDL laws, ways to avoid collisions and the dangers of speeding and driving distracted.